

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there were differences in the prevalence of self-reported depression between men and women who had been exposed to violence during childhood and adulthood. Data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (*N = 9,800*) were used to examine the association between exposure to violence and self-reported depression among adolescents aged 15–17 years. Results showed that exposure to violence during childhood and adulthood was associated with higher rates of self-reported depression. The association between exposure to violence and self-reported depression was stronger for women than for men.

Keywords: Depression, violence, gender, adolescence

Depression is a common mental health problem that affects millions of people worldwide. It is characterized by persistent feelings of sadness, loss of interest in activities, changes in appetite and sleep patterns, and thoughts of suicide (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Depression can have serious consequences on an individual's physical and mental health, as well as on their social and occupational functioning. Therefore, understanding the risk factors for depression is crucial for developing effective prevention and treatment strategies.

One of the most significant risk factors for depression is exposure to violence. Exposure to violence can occur at different stages of life, including childhood and adulthood. Childhood exposure to violence has been found to be associated with higher rates of depression later in life (Finkelhor & Browne, 1985; Widom et al., 2006). Similarly, exposure to violence in adulthood has also been linked to increased risk of depression (Kessler et al., 1997; O'Leary et al., 2002).

Gender is another important factor that may influence the relationship between exposure to violence and depression. Research has shown that women are more likely than men to experience depression following exposure to violence (Finkelhor & Browne, 1985; Widom et al., 2006). This finding suggests that there may be differences in the way men and women process and respond to traumatic events, leading to higher rates of depression among women.

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